CHAPTER THREE

THE PRACTICE

a. Satî of Rajas

From a consideration of the evidence that has been discussed, the one fact that emerges is the regarding of satî as a completely normal occurrence in the royal households in the hills. This, because the royal houses were almost invariably Rajputs, and with the Rajputs these is the indissoluble connection of this custom of satî the "sovereign symbol of a soul's despair." Rajput annals are filled with record of satî and the extent of the prevalence of the custom in the Pahari regions nearly parallels that in the more well known areas that form part of Rajasthan. It is, in fact, because of this Rajput dominance that the Panjab hills are so sharply distinguished in this respect, from the plains of the Panjab from where we get only occasional evidence of the prevalence of the


practice.

There seems to be little doubt that it was the non-occurrence of sati rather than its occurrence that came in for special notice in the hills, especially where local records are concerned. It is for the same reason again that as far as written records go, there is more mention of sati in the accounts of foreigners because to them the practice was alien and something curiously to be viewed and regarded.

Undoubtedly, sati had become a matter of pride in the hills. It is certainly demonstrable that it was one that involved a family's honour. Then Vigne says, thus, "... that the omission of the ceremony would be looked upon as an act of disrespect to the memory of a deceased hajah ..." he was fairly and accurately recording

1. While instances of sati in the rest of Northern India and, especially, in Bengal were come across in several accounts, from the Panjab there is only occasional evidence that we are able to locate. We hear of the followers of Guru Harobind jumping into the flames (S.W. Latif, History of the Panjab, p. 257), and Bernier mentions a beautiful young widow immolating herself at Lahore (Travels, p. 314) Jaccumont noticed some sati monuments in Karnal but mentioned: "This practice is very rare among the Hindus of the Doab." The Punjab A Hundred Years Ago, Part I, p. 9.

the feeling. It does not come as a surprise therefore when we find the brother of the Rajput widow of Maharaja Khurak Singh of Lahore, urging her to immolate herself on her husband’s funeral pyre, for it would be a matter of "insult and slight for the family of the Rajputs," if she did not.

It is difficult to precisely trace the beginnings of sati in the hills because of want of exact evidence. But it is interesting that the traditional accounts show Shumi Chandra, the founder of the Katoh line, some thousand years before the battle of Mahabharata, being accompanied by his wives on the pyre. While this is apparently based upon the imagination of the Culer chronicles, because sati at that early a date may not really have existed as a normal practice, it reflects at least the belief in the 19th century that the practice went back to an immemorial past.

The accounts in the Rajatarangini point in no uncertain terms to the prevalence of the custom in Kashmir.

and the areas under its paramountcy which included
states like Chamba and Kangra, then known as Jalandhar,
and the burning of the Jalandhar princess Shyamwati at
the demise of her husband Ananta of Kashmir in A.D. 1081,
brings the presence of the practice in the Panjab hills
into sharp focus.

From the Panjab hills proper, one can take up
the state of Mandi first because of our being able to
gather evidence of sati from there from different
sources like inscriptions and monuments and histories,
and because it was an area where sati was more intensively
practised. Here at most from the 17th century onwards
we have consistent records relating to successive reigns
that speak of sati. This is not to lead one to assume
the sudden introduction of sati there in the 17th century,
because sati stones from earlier reigns may well have been
destroyed or claimed by the river on the banks of which
they stood outside the town of Mandi. With the death
of Suraj Sen of Mandi (c. A.D. 1637-1664) in A.D. 1664

2. This stream is called the Suketi khad and it gets
filled with water during the rainy season.
is not only connected the sati of his ten raniis but also a story about the throwing of a dagger by one of them in anger. That one comes upon again and again in Mandi and that we have noticed before. From the same reign there is evidence of the existence of Sati in the families of the Ranas also. We find this in the events that speak of the reduction of Rana of 'anantpur, one of the last Ranas left to be brought under submission by Suraj Sen. Since the fort of Anantpur was very strongly situated and difficult to capture, Suraj Sen's intrepid wazir Jalpu devised a plan for the reduction of the fort by deceit. Following the plan, the Raja showed strong anger with Jalpu over something and sent him away in disgrace. Jalpu then went and entered the service of the Rana of Anantpur. In due course of time he gained the Rana's confidence and was also made the Rani's dharam bhai. Having succeeded so far, he one day asked the Rana's permission to bring the ladies of his family to visit the shrine of the Devi which was within the fort. This request being granted, he sent word to Raja Suraj Sen for sending in eighteen litters packed with armed

men in disguise. On reaching the fort, the soldiers attached and killed the Rana, and the fort was captured. Upon this, the Rana’s wife became sati but before mounting to the pyre she pronounced a curse on Jalou and his family which, the story says, came true.

The death of Raja Gaur Sen of Mandi (A.D. 1679-1684) was followed by twenty-four satis. At the death of Raja Siddh Sen of Mandi (A.D. 1684-1727), two raniis burnt themselves at the funeral pyre. A number of ladies of the harem of Raja Shamsher Sen of Mandi practised sati at his demise in A.D. 1781. Raja Surma Sen’s death in A.D. 1799 was followed by six of his raniis burning themselves with their master. At the death of Ishwari Sen of Mandi in A.D. 1826 we hear of as many as twenty-six ladies of the harem becoming sati with him. It is only when Raja Balbir

2. Man Mohan, A History of the Mandi State, p. 57. It is to be noted that no inscription from the barshala of Raja Gaur Sen and his Satis is noticed by Sir Alexander Cunningham.
3. Ibid., p. 72.
4. Ibid., p. 77.
5. Ibid., p. 93.
6. Ibid., p. 93.
Sen of Mandi died, in Jan. 1851, that this chain of sati breaks in Mandi because by this time the ban on sati had become effective throughout these parts, having been incorporated in the terms of the **sanad** or treaty of 1846, by which some of these states not under direct British rule were handed over to their rulers. Quite obviously, the effectiveness of Capt Kennedy's 1 attempt at discovering Sati in the area of the Simal hills earlier in the twenties of the XIX century had not extended to Mandi, and it needed a firm measure like this to ban sati effectively to these states.

The extent of sati in Suket was quite like that in Mandi. Although these satis are not as well documented, the presence of the large number of **bansias** at Sundernagar (figs. 26, 27) is a fair indication. For each death in the royal family followed by sati was

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1. See Jacquemont's account in the **Panish a Hundred Years Ago**, Part I, p. 9. Kennedy in the hills had also anticipated the order of the Governor-General. A sati had taken place some years ago in one of the villages under his control. Kennedy held the Rajah responsible, and above all the hill Chiefs, he was excluded, from Lord Ambert's presence when the latter visited Simla, in 1827.
commemorated by these. A traditional account touching upon the reigns of Bilal Sen and Sawant Sen of Suket in the 11th century, one might mention, tells of a rani with an infant son surviving her husband and fleeing for her safety, but this appears to have been an exception to the rule of sati. This kind of exception had the sanction of religious authority behind it, for the safety of a small child often was reason enough for the non-performance of sati.

The sati stones from Julu we have noticed, are to be found principally at two places: Nargar and Shamsi. This, because Nargar was the early capital of the Kulu state and remained so down till the time of Jayat Singh (A.D. 1637-1672) who transferred the capital to Sultanpur (also called Raghunathpur) from where Shamsi is not far. Of the large group of barasias at Nargar, notice was taken by Capt. Harcourt and Forbes, among others. Capt. Harcourt wrote especially of the barasias "Ornamented with rule-carvings of chiefs of Kooloo, their wives ... being

2. See F.V. Kave, History of Charnahasta, Vol. IV, p. 237, for the mention on the authority of early texts that pregnant women or those that had young children should not commit sati.
portrayed either beside them or in lines below...."

"The report is", he further wrote "that these stones were placed in position at the death of every reigning sovereign of Kooloo, the female figures being the effigies of such wives or mistresses who have performed suttee at their lord's demise ...." Forbes also writes of the Kulu 7arasnts on each of which is carved "a rough effigy of the late chief ... surrounded by as many wives as were burnt at his death ...." The Shamri group of carved stones, representing the Rajas and their wives and concubines who became sati have not been as well noticed, although the Archaeological Survey Reports, have, as expected, taken note of them.

In Kulu we come upon a traditional but sanguine story about a very early sati. This is about the widow of Raja Mandozur, who was murdered by his brother-in-law. When the rani prepared to burn herself with the body of the raja, she was carrying, in her womb a child of seven months at that time. A Bhat whose name is given as Sham Dass, fearing that the whole family of his vajmna will

1. To Kulu and Back. pp. 75-76.


thus be extinguished, prayed to the rani to postpone her immolation, for the child to be born might turn out to be male and the family line might thus survive. The rani was however adamant upon becoming sati and in reply to the Bhat's entreaties, she cut upon her belly and handed over the unborn baby to the Bhat and mounted the funeral pyre. This baby, a boy, later became Raja Gawai Singh. From Kulu yet another early story referring to sati, that of Rana Jhonna, is preserved in the folk memory. Jhonna Rana, it is said, had a groom who was known by the name of "Wuchiani", on account of the length of his moustache. He was also known for his skill with bow and arrow. The Rana once asked him to shave off his moustache, but the groom refused to do so and thus caused unpleasantness between them. The Rana then put him to a test: he asked him to shoot down a bird sitting on a cow's back, without hurting the cow; failing this, he was bold, his moustache would be shorn. The groom came out successful in the test but at the cost of all good feeling between himself and the Rana. This situation was exploited by Raja Sidh Singh of Kulu (c. 1577).

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who was inimical towards the Rana. He sent for the
Buchiani and bribed him to kill the Rana. The Rana,
was duly killed by the groom. On hearing of the death
of the Rana, his wife set fire to the fort "perishing
with all the women."

But one of the most interesting legends about
sati in Kulu relates to the period of Raja Man Singh
(1698-1719). This Raja is said to have fallen in
love with the wife of the Rana of Kumharsen. The Rana,
having come to know of this, enticed Man Singh to Srikot,
across the Satluj where he was set upon by the
2 Bashahris and killed. His head was then taken to
Bashahr where it was put up on a long pole for public
display. His rani who were in Kulu learnt of the Raja’s
head murder and wanted his head to become sati with. So a
trusted man was sent to Bashahr in the guise of a sadhu.
Upon reaching Bashahr, he asked the local whose head it
was that they had cut up on the pole. When he was told
the story and the name of the Raja whose head it was, he
remarked: "O Man Singh! you are great indeed. Even
when you are dead your enemies pass under your head, daily."

1. This was narrated by Pandit Sham Dew of Kulu.
gives the story but only up to this point.
This remark reached the Raja of Bashahr who got very annoyed and asked his men to throw the head to the vultures. This was done, and the sadhu, who was waiting for this opportunity picked up and brought the head to the rani who then became sati.

We have evidence from Kulu also from the reign of Raja Jai Singh (A.D. 1731-1742). He died far away from his home at Ayodhya in present Uttar Pradesh; his wives who had stayed behind in Kulu are said, therefore, to have become sati with his katar, or dagger that was brought back to them. The death of Tedi Singh of Kulu (A.D. 1742-1767) was followed by sixty-four satis. The bahi entries recording the deaths of Raja Pritam Singh and Raja Ajit Singh have already been noticed, but the saties following Ajit Singh’s death (in A.D. 1841) must have been among the last in that area.

Contrary to expectation, for the state was large and powerful, there is no concentration of sati stones in Kangra which could tell of satis committed over a period of time. This, however, is due not to the non-observance of saties there but because, from the 17th

2. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 60.
century onwards, the Katoch royal family was in exile from Kangra, having for most part chosen to defy Mughal authority. They were forced to shift their capital frequently and in the century and a half after the capture of Kangra by the Mughals, they were shifting the root of whatever power was left to them from Kangra to Askot, from Askot to Jaisinghpur, from Jaisinghpur to Birjapur, and from Birjapur to Alampur and Sujanpur.

Even so, the large group of dhari at Jaisinghpur that we have noticed before, and the few at Kangra proper bespeak of the prevalence of the custom. From other areas in Kangra not connected with the Katoch family necessarily also there is evidence of monuments that is available. A barfora that stands at Kalessar, another at Kharuli are mentioned in the Archaeological Survey Reports. We have also of sculptured commemorative collars from a Miragom near Sajjath. When Moorcroft noted them, during his stay with Sansar Chand of Kangra, that "the

1. See for details, Goswamy, *Social Background*, p. 43.
2. *Archaeological Survey Reports, Panjab*, 1901-02 to 1903-04, p. 112.
practice of the horrible rite of sati is frequent in these mountains," he was no doubt recording an observed and ascertainable fact. The account that he gives of the preparation of the wives of the ailing Fateh Chand for becoming sati points to the inevitability of the practice in a family as proud as the Katoch.

In Bilaspur, tradition about sati goes back at least to the 9th century when we hear of the two rani of Raja Shail Chand, Hemwati and Devi Satl, becoming sati. While Hemwati the elder of the two rani became sati with the body of the husband, the younger one, Devi Satl, who was pregnant at that time waited till after she had given birth to a child. Then she put on her late husband's clothes and became sati. The devotion of this rani was appropriately celebrated by her coming to be regarded as the Kul Devi of the royal house of Bilaspur. A temple to her memory was raised and it still attracts large crowds as Devi Sakrathi.

Raja Kalyan Chand of Bilaspur again was killed in a battle against Shyam Sen of Suket in about A.D. 1645. The Raja's body was brought to Bilaspur where his rani, Suket princess herself, became sati with him. When Raja

Nari Chand of Bilaspur was killed in battle with Guru Gobind Singh, his ranis became sat at Bhangani. The sati stones in the town of Bilaspur, marking the place where widows have been burnt with their husbands, related also no doubt to other sati in the royal family.

One of the very early recorded sati from the Panjab hills, which finds mention in Rajatarangini, is that of the two Chamba princesses, both of whom were married to King Sussala of Kashmir. At his death in 1128, Kalhana tells us, "The Queen Devalekha, who came from Champa, and whose beauty was as great as the Creator could make it, entered the fire with her sister Taralalekha." We have also noticed the stone inscription from Chamba in which Rana Naga Pala is mentioned as keeping his mother from becoming sati at the time of the death of his father. The phraseology of the inscription fairly clearly indicates that becoming a sati was the most

natural for a Rani of that point of time, and if this was not done, then an explanation is called for. In the temple at Udaipur, three miles below Chamba, the carved stone slab, with the effigies of four Ranic and eighteen maids commemorates those who became sati at the death of Uda Singh in A.D. 1720, (see fig. 78). Then the brave Raj Singh of Chamba died in A.D. 1794, at Kerti, in territory occupied by the enemy, he was cremated in Bihlu fort, but the news of his death led to his ranis becoming sati at Chamba. In Chamba, the last, sati we hear of are with Raja Charat Singh who died in 1844. Two of his raniis became sati with him but soon after that came the ban on Sati even here.

From Jammu, not much information about the early period is available. In the 3rd or 4th century, however, we hear of Raja Rajalab of Jammu getting killed in a fight and his rani becoming sati. Then we have the recorded wish of Ranjit Dev of Jammu that his wives do not burn themselves at his death. The passage, that treats of this,

however, clearly takes sati completely for granted. Related to the death of a scion of the Jammu house whom he does not name, the traveller, Vigne records this incident:

"At Lahore I once, taking a Sarabi with me, threaded my way up to the pile, and offered the unhappy victim a sum of money if she would not burn. I should perhaps rather say that I mentioned it to the bystander; for I am not certain that she was told of it, or that she would quite have comprehended my meaning. She was the widow of one of the last of the rightful family of the Jumu Rajahs, who had been dispossessed of their country."

With the coming to power of the family of the Degra brothers, Dhyan Singh, Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh in Jammu and allied states, the evidence on sati increases considerably. The brothers were connected with the royal Jammu house, although they belonged to a junior branch, having descended from Sunit Singh, one of

1. Travels, Vol. II, p. 84. It strikes one as curious that Vigne should have thought of dissuading this girl by the offer of money.
younger brothers of Ranjit Dev. This, in itself, would have made them belong to the kind of Rajput family in which satis were a matter of course. But even if this were not so and the custom was not as rigorously followed in their family as it would be in a royal house, the rich and royal status of the Dogra brothers, who were really Jamwals, must have resulted in their enthusiastic adoption of the practice, since it was one of the things which proclaimed pride of descent and mobility of blood. With the death of nearly all members of this family, thus, satis are connected. When Raja Dhyan Singh got murdered at Lahore in 1843, his widows and female slaves prepared to become sati with his dead body. The entire episode, his highly dramatic, like many other events at this point in the history of the Panjab, and we find skilful use of the sanctity of sati, and the emotions it stirred, for a political end by Raja Hira Singh, his son. He, we learn,

"craftily delayed the immolation of his step-mother and her women, keeping them waiting in the presence of the troops, whose fury against the murderers of Dahan Singh was increased ten fold by the scene.

The Raja had it also publicly
proclaimed that not only would he
not eat or drink till the assassins
were slain, but that the widowed Rane
would not mount the pile till she had
beheld the several heads of her husband's
murderers. On this the troops wildly and
clamorously demanded orders to advance, but
are these were given they had rushed
forward, forty or fifty-five thousand
men, infantry and dismounted cavalry, —
and were soon chiseling and clustering about
the breach like bees at the entrance of
their hive ... The head of Ajit Singh
Srinawalla (who killed Dehan Singh) was
laid at the feet of Dehan Singh's widow
who on beholding it explained, "Now
I am ready to follow my lord and husband;
and," said she, addressing Hera Singh,
"I will tell your dear father that you
have acted the part of a brave and dutiful
son." Saying this she, followed by her
women, ascended the pile; talking at the
same time with the most perfect composure,
ordering her affairs, making presents and giving alms. Her last act was to place the Kulgee or warrior’s plume of her late husband in the turban of her stepson Hira Singh. This done she placed herself in a reclining posture on the pile, with her women, thirteen in number, around her; then with a smiling and joyful face she took leave of all around, and lastly in a proud and lofty tone she commanded that the torch should be applied. Her command was obeyed, and soon nothing remained but an undistinguishable heap of glowing embers.”

The death of Raja Suchet Singh, younger brother of Maharaja Gulab Singh occurred in Lahore on 26th March 1844. When the news of his death arrived at Samba, near Jammu where his family was,

“his three raniis and thirtytwo vaids came out of the palace, bedecked with jewellery. They gave large amounts from the treasury in charity, faced the whole public without purdah and entering doliis reached the banks of the stream flows below Samba, when their eyes had been readied the raniis said, that they will not
be able to join the soul of the Raja for two days but on the third day in the afternoon they will be united with him. At that time they said, 'A hurricane will blow, a thunder cloud will rise in the sky and then it would rain.' They told the mourning crowd which had gathered that when this happened the rani will have joined the spirit of the Raja.

The news of Suchet Singh's death reached Ramnagar (Bandralta State), where the other part of the family of Raja Suchet Singh was on the next day. There also two raniis and thirty maids became sati in the Chauqan of Ramnagar.

At the death of Raja Hira Singh, son of Chian Singh, in 1844, his widows also practised sati at a place called Parmandal near Jammu.

"There was a large square stage made, built up of faggots, with a rough roof raised over it; between the faggot gh, 


2. Raja Hira Singh had been given the jagir of Jasrota, but it is likely that his wives were at Parmandal, which is a place of pilgrimage in these parts.
that is, clarified butter, was placed, to increase the violence of the flames; the women, twenty-two in number, were seated on the platform; the wood was fired, and the burning was finished without a scream or a voice being heard from them . . .

No sati; however, followed the death of Maharaja Gulab Singh in A.D. 1867 because of the ban which had by then placed on sati.

Evidence of sati from many other places is not available with any consistency, but we do come across occasional and useful information. We have noticed the hundred satis from Basohli, following the death of Raja Sangram Pal and Imrit Pal of that state. Sati was thus practised in Bashahr, and we hear of an instance of as many as twelve women becoming sati with a raja of that state. Rahul Sakrityayana also refers to the sati of

2. Ghulam Sarwar Nureshi, Tarikh-Nakhzan-i-Panjab, p.126.
three rans at the death of Raja Ugar Singh of Bashahr in A.D. 1811. We come across stray references to sati in the Simla Hill State also, at a place called Halog a fair is held on the second day of Diwali in the month of November, commemorating the death of the ruler of this former principality of his consort, who performed, 1 sati. In Kewthal, again in the Simla Hills, we hear of "... twentytwo suttees, male and female" which Capt. Kennedy referred to in 1824 as "bad record of the respect and esteem in which the last Rana was held by his subjects."

In a class apart is the immolation by Rajput princesses who were married in non-Rajput families. Such cases not many, because Rajput pride did not approve of such alliances but there are some cases on record. The most well known being that of the Rajput rani of the Sikh ruler of Lahore, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who died on the 27th of June, 1830. This princess, Raj Devi was the daughter of the celebrated Sansar Chand of Kangra from a Gaddan rani. The Maharaja had also married his younger sister, but the latter died of consumption in

1835. Raj Devi, however, immolated herself with the body of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The practice of the Sikh family into which this princess had been married did not include sati following the death of a husband. Yet it was her Rajput origin which made her commit sati, because the honour of her paternal family was in a sense involved. Many accounts of this famous sati are available, but the most detailed is the eye-witness account left by Dr. Honingberger.

"In the large yard, we observed one of the four royalties (queens) coming out of the harem on foot and unveiled, for the first time in her life. She was slowly proceeding towards the place where the royal body was lying, and she was surrounded by about one hundred persons, who kept themselves at some distance, while accompanying her. Close to her side there was a man carrying a small box, containing the remainder of her jewels (as she had already distributed some), which she made presents of, handing them one by one to the people on her right and left."

1. Thirty Five Years in the East, no. 93,101.
Two or three steps in front of her, there was a man moving in a backward direction; his face turned towards her, and holding a looking glass, that she might convince herself that her features were unaltered, and no fear visible on them ... She was ... a daughter of Sunar Chand, ... The funeral train, accompanied by many thousands of spectators, was now proceeding; all were on foot, their abode in the fortress not being far distant from the place of the ceremony, the four ranees only were carried, in open palanquins, behind the deceased, after them followed the seven female slaves, barefooted; some of them appeared not more than fourteen or fifteen years of age. The ranees too, were barefooted, their silk dresses were simple, and without any ornaments, and they appeared to be indifferent to the awful though voluntary fate which awaited them. Perhaps our hearts throbbed more at the view, than those of the poor victims themselves. The body of Ranjit Singh was placed on a board, to which it was probably
fastened, and was carried on a light bier and decorated constructed in a shape of a ship; the sails and flags of the vessel were made of rich golden and silk stuff (Kim Kah), and of Cashmere shawls. A number of people carried the bier from the interior of the fortress up to the funeral pile, there the board with the body was taken out of it and deposited on the ground, ... The costly ornaments of the richly decorated bier were given to the mob; the Brahmins performed their prayers from the shaster, a book written in the Indian or Sanskrit language, the Gooroes, or the Priests of the Sikhs, did the same, from the holy scriptures called Granthsahib, and the Musalman accompanied them with their 'Ya, Allah! Ya, Allah!' A show, but not displeasing: grumbling of the drums, and the murmuring of the people, gave to the whole scene a melancholy aspect, and was peculiar to the country. The funeral pile which displayed itself before the eyes of the spectators, was constructed of dry woods, amongst which there were pieces of
alone; it was about six feet high and square. After the prayers of the Brahmins and Goorrhos, which lasted nearly an hour, the minister and other sirdars ascended by a ladder the funeral pile, upon which ignitable matters and substances, as cotton-seed &c. were strewn, and the royal body was respectfully placed in the middle of the pile, together with the board. After this the ranees ascended the fatal ladder, one by one, according to their rank, the slaves followed, and the minister showed himself very officious in affording them assistance. The ranees placed themselves at the head of the royal body, and the slaves close at its feet. There they covered, remaining in silent expectation for the fatal moment, when a strong thick mat of reeds being bright, with which the whole were covered, oil was then poured over the mat, the ministers and sirdars descended, and the pile was lighted at each corner. In a few moments, the deplorable victims of our
abominable and fanatic ceremony had ceased to exist.

The consuming of the pile occupied two days."

b. Satis by jolis or maid-servants.

Quite an extra-ordinary, though ancient, aspect of the practice of sati is the burning of jolis or maid-servants with the body of their master. In a sense the custom dates back to ancient Egypt where servants were sacrificed along with wives and steeds at the death of a King. But even in India we hear of the immolation of servants, from quite early times. For servants to burn themselves must have been considered a supreme act of loyalty, bringing honour and, perhaps, indirect reward, to the families from which they came. Genuine devotion cannot also be ruled out, although in some cases the incentive might well have been the giving of proof of devotion.

In the matter of satis of this type, one must distinguish between concubines and dasis or jolis. A concubine of the king called Khawas or rakheal, had

a status lower only to that of the legally married
associate
rani and her attendant to her husband did lead to the
expectation that she too will become sati. But dasis
or gosis belonged to altogether lower category of
servants. Even they, however, were permanently attached
to the Raja or one of his rani is and it is their becoming
sati in such large numbers which comes as something of
a surprise.

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The Rajatarangini makes early mention of some
satis of maid servants. At the death of King Ananta of
Kashmir, in 1081, thus, his female servants, Udda,
Nonika and Valya, we are told, followed him on the funeral
pyre. A dancing girl, Sahaja by name, practised sati,
along with other ladies of the harem, when King Utkara
of Kashmir committed suicide. Similarly Jayamati, a
concubine is recorded as having practised sati at the
demise of King Kalsa. It was another concubine, Kayya,
who Kalhana tells us disgraced herself by not becoming
sati:

"If she did not remember that her lord had given her the foremost position in the whole seraglio, no matter, let her not remember it, because she was of low origin."

Kalhana lists, again six female attendants who died in the same fire as consumed the body of King Malla of Kashmir.

The large number of figures on the barazais at Mandi, Nagpur and Sundersnagar are all accounted for, not by the rajas having had all these women as wives or legally married rani's, but apparently by the number of dasis who followed their masters in distress to the pyre. The evidence of the monuments themselves on this point we have noticed before. Sir Alexander Cunningham records counting "the number of satis as figured on the pillars of 10 Rajas", at 252. Moorcroft, during his travels halted at Bajaura, near Kulu, where he heard of the death of a Rani whose body had been burnt along with eleven of her female attendants. In this case the death

of the Raja is not mentioned and if the gulis followed only the Bani who might for some reason have become sati at the death of her husband, then this must be a rather rare case of its kind. At the death of Raja Pritam Singh of Kulu (see fig. 15) nine of his female servants immolated themselves. But in a sense the satis by gulis come alive most vividly in the leaf of Haridwar bahi in which the names of all the various maidservants who burnt themselves following the death of Bikram Singh of Kulu are severally given. Thus we read there (fig. 18) of "The ashes of Chawas Jiru, daughter of Kirna Ram, the maidservants Nupdasi, Abalu, Ugi, Guisho, Jajnu, Ramdasi, Bodl, Drondu and the chhokris Mansu and Sibu" being brought to Haridwar. Altogether thirty-four maidservants immolated themselves

1. Kulu Bahi of Pandit Som Nath Chaklan at Haridwar.
2. Kulu Bahi of Pandit Som Nath Chaklan at Haridwar.
with this Raja. Similarly the ashes of six maid servants, Kundasi, Giansa, Niranjanu, Tulsai, Ramdas and Uttam along with the ashes of Raja Ajit Singh are recorded as having been brought to Haridwar.

1. Kulu Sahi of Pendit Som Nath Chakan at Haridwar.


2. Kulu Sahi Pendit Som Nath Chakan at Haridwar.
A striking incident relating to the immolation of a maidservant following the death of Raja Chyan Singh at Lahore, narrated by Smyth, is of interest here:

"A female child of ten years old, a slave girl from the hills, an attendant on the widowed Raneem, was pronounced by all, including her mistress, to be too young to perform the rite of suhba with the elder women. The Raneem therefore, fondly caressing her, and ordering her a liberal provision, gave her in charge of her step-son, Hare Singh, with the strictest injunctions to take care of her. But the child would not live; three times she threw herself on the pile, imploring her mistress to let her share her fate. With the energy beyond her years, she loudly protested by the dead and murdered corpse before her, that if she was not allowed to die now, she would by some other means put an end to her life. On this the Raneem and all around seeing her resolutely bent on her performing the

suttee, and to prevent her doing so 
would be to no purpose, reluctantly 
allowed her to share the fate of 
her mistress and her elder companions. 
The Ranee took her and placed her at 
his feet, while the others reclined 
around their mistress, who lay with the 
head of her husband in her lap, — the 
torch was applied to the pile, and 
the living and the dead were alike 
reduced to ashes."

Occasionally, but only occasionally, we get 
evidence of not only female servants but also males 
following their master in his death. Of these 
some are mentioned in the Rajtarangini, also. As many 
as twenty men, it is said, burnt themselves with a 
1 Raja of Bhasahr. With the body of another Raja of the 
same state, Ugar Singh, two wazis and one chohedar became 
2 'sati'. The most well-known case of a Mian 
becoming 'sati', of course, is that of Raja Dhyana Singh 
following the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.3

1. Ghulam Sarwar Qureshi, Larikh Makhzan-i-Panjab, 
p. 126.

2. Kinnar Deesh Man, p. 322.

3. There are many among contemporaries who seriously 
doubted the genuineness of this gesture on the part 
of 'Raja Kalan'.